Incentives to increase production of sugarcane

*96. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugar has become the nation's biggest imported item;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last five years, year-wise;

(c) the reasons for such import; and

(d) the steps being taken to increase the production to meet the demands by giving incentives to the sugarcane farmers in each State especially in the southern States?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Sugar is not the nation's single largest imported item, Sugar imports constitute only a small fraction of the total imports. Imports are undertaken to increase overall domestic availability of sugar. Import of sugar during the last five years, year-wise, has been as under:-

Quantity : In Lac Tons

Financial Year	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Import of Sugar	9.33	5.59	Negligible	Negligible	3.61(P)

Source: Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence

(d) The Central Government has taken a number of steps to encourage production of sugarcane as detailed below:

(i) The Central Government has fixed the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane payable by sugar mills for 2009-10 sugar season. This FRP substantially high over the SMP of 2008-09 sugar season.

(ii) The Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System (SUBACS) is one of the Component of Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) namely Revised Macro Management of Agriculture Scheme (RMMA). RMMA is implemented in all States and Union Territories of the country. The main thrust of SUBACS is on the transfer of improved production technology to the farmers through field demonstrations, training of farmers, supply of farm implements enhancing production of planting material, efficient use of water, treatment of planting materials. During 2008-09, in all, 19 States implemented SUBACS.

(iii) Concessional loans at an interest rate of 4% per-annum are given to sugar factories from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) for modernization of plant and machinery, expansion of crushing capacity, utilization of bye-products which baggage for co-generation of power and molasses for production of ethanol, upgradation of

technology and sugarcane development including better irrigation facilities, improved seed variety, ratoon management, etc.

(iv) A short term scheme has been announced for cane development in the current financial year under which loans of Rs.1-2.5 crores will be available to sugar factories depending upon their crushing capacity, for purchase of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc. This loan is expected to be passed on to the farmers.

Donation to a political party by PSUs

*97. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during 2007-08, State Trading Corporation (STC) and Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC) gave donations to political parties;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government companies like STC and MMTC can give public money to political parties as donations;

(d) if so, under what authority; and

(e) if not, the action taken or proposed to be taken against guilty persons?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) MMTC and STC did not give donation during 2007-08 to any political party which figured in the list of Recognised National/State parties or in the list of Registered Unrecognised Parties maintained by the Election Commission of India as available in their compilation "Political Parties and Election Symbols" on their official website. However, National Students Union of India (NSUI) made a request in January, 2007 to both the organisations to contribute for conducting a quiz programme as part of the nation-wide campaign as Centenary Celebrations of Satyagraha. The programme envisaged organizing quiz shows along with cultural performances in various universities across the country. For this, NSUI had identified 44 important universities classified into six different zones and the total number of quiz shows to be organized was indicated to be 52 in number. NSUI had also indicated confirmed participation from some well known social, political, film, academics and media luminaries. They had provided the details of organizing one quiz competition at Rs.2.52 lakhs and requested for suitable contributions from both the organisations. MMTC and STC both provided Rs.1 lakh each of NSUI as part of cost of organising the programme. However, it has been noticed that while filing the return with the Election Commission of India for the year 2007-08, All India Congress Committee has reflected this contribution as a part of the donations received by the party Indian National Congress for the financial year 2007-08 as required under section 29C(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

*Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.